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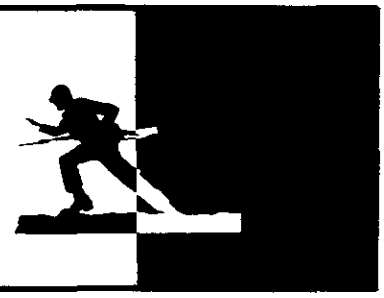


The Army of the 1990s
Challenges of Change and Continuity

GENERAL CARL E. VUONO

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is based upon remarks given by General Vuono, Chief of Staff of the Army, at the Infantry Conference dinner on 11 April 1991.

This is truly a great time to be a soldier in the service of our nation. Perhaps at no time in recent memory has America been more alive with pride in its soldiers — a pride that is evident in the banners and yellow ribbons that adorn our nation from coast to coast and in the dignity and respect with which American soldiers are treated. These emotions are well deserved by the generation of young Americans that fill our ranks today, for they are the best America has to offer.

I have had numerous opportunities over the past several months to visit with soldiers, and the story of our success is apparent in their eyes. There is an intense pride — a pride in victory on the battlefield, in the liberation of Kuwait, and in the defense of freedom throughout the world. And in those same eyes is the heritage of the American infantry — a heritage of dedication and selfless sacrifice.

The magnitude of this success, however, is also a tribute to the Total Army — not just to the winning team of Active, Reserve, and National Guard soldiers and units but also to our soldiers worldwide, for wherever they fulfilled their mission on the ramparts of freedom, they contributed to and share in the triumph of DESERT STORM.

So in this time of great national celebration, I want to talk about Operation DESERT STORM and discuss the infantry's role as an integral part of the combined arms team in support of our emerging national military strategy. It is a story of change and continuity, change in the environment, in our strategy, and our forces, but continuity of capabilities and continuity of purpose as we move forward toward a new world order.

August 2, 1990 was a pivotal moment in history. It defined the end of one era and the dawn of another. For it was on that day that the legions of Saddam Hussein launched their brutal aggression against Kuwait and threatened the very fabric of the international system. And it was on that same day, on the other side of the world, that President Bush discussed a new national military strategy for the United States — a strategy that would have profound implications for the total Army and would receive its baptism of fire in the struggle to free Kuwait from its oppressors.

The strategy has its roots in three fundamental factors that define the nature of the international system in the post-cold war era. The first of these, and the most important, is the unambiguous success of our strategy of containment and the collapse of the Soviet empire. The second is the challenge of a world in a state of revolutionary change — a world alive with unprecedented opportunities but also rife with instability and violence. The final factor is, of course, the precipitous decline in the resources that we are able to devote to national defense.

These three factors have led us to move beyond the victorious strategy of containment to a strategy of power projection. And at the center of this strategy stands the American infantryman as the bedrock of the trained and ready combined arms team.

ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGY

The new military strategy rests on the time-honored principles of deterrence

and collective security. At the same time, the strategy places new emphasis on three additional concepts: forward presence, power projection, and force reconstitution. Each of these is of central importance to the Army and must be understood by all Army leaders as we move into a time of great international uncertainty.

First, as an element of our nation's forward presence, the Army will maintain powerful forces stationed in Europe and the Pacific to anchor stability and to provide a credible capability to influence events in those critical regions. The bulk of this combat power will be armor and infantry divisions — both mechanized and light.

Commensurate with the declining Soviet threat, however, we can — and we will — reduce our forces in Europe to a level appropriate to the challenges we confront. After more than four decades along the Iron Curtain, many of America's forces can now come home, and they are coming home in triumph — the guardians of an historic victory symbolized by the battle streamer which was recently awarded to the lst Infantry Division (Forward) on behalf of a grateful German nation.

The concept of forward presence is, of course, more than simply stationing forces. It requires challenging joint and combined exercises that involve rotations of forces to Europe and Asia as well as deployments to other areas.

The heart of our new military strategy lies in the second element — the projection of power from within the continental United States to trouble spots around the world. If we are to use our Army to best effect, we must now concentrate our forces and rely on our ability to project power swiftly and massively to advance and defend our vital interests.

These forces will be coiled in readiness to immediately deploy, fight, and win. From this powerful grouping of armored, mechanized, light, and special operations units, we will tailor the package that is appropriate to the threat that we confront.

Power projection also requires that the Army have the capacity to reinforce our combat forces that are deployed either in forward positions or power projection missions. A critical element of these power projection forces will be our active component divisions rounded-out by the maneuver brigades from the National Guard. For more protracted or larger-scale conflicts in Europe or elsewhere, the Army will rely on its remaining reinforcing units — the combat divisions of the National Guard.

The final aspect of the strategy is the requirement to reconstitute the force. Reconstitution — put simply — means the generation of additional forces from units that are either not fully manned or must be mobilized as we did during World War II. In this regard, we are examining the utility of establishing cadre divisions — units that would have leaders and equipment during peacetime but would be filled with a complete personnel complement during times of national emergency.

That is the essence of our new strategy: forward presence, power projection, and reconstitution. It is a laser-like strategy that focuses our forces along a beam of concentrated power and energy to accomplish our national objectives.

DESERT STORM

Seldom has a national strategy been more quickly tested by fire. For, even as the president was announcing the strategy, the Iraqi Army stood victorious in Kuwait and was poised like a dagger at the throat of the entire world. With virtually no American forces forward deployed in the region, the United States faced the monumental challenge of projecting credible, capable combat power from the United States and from Europe.

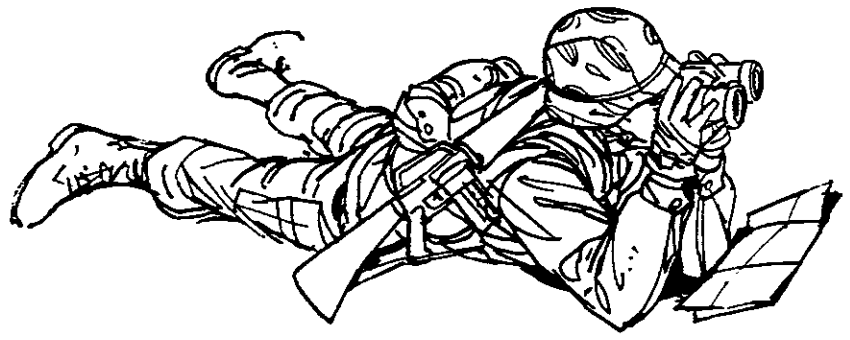
The immediate goal was to demonstrate to Saddam Hussein the unambiguous resolve of the United States. The President accomplished this objective by using the most credible instrument at his disposal — the American soldier. Indeed, when the time came to demonstrate the resolve of the United States, the President drew a line in the sand with the bayonet of a paratrooper from the 82d Airborne Division.

Beginning with those first, uncertain days of August, the United States and our coalition partners methodically built a mighty force that could withstand the power of the Iraqi Army. It was that same force that would ultimately drive the forces of Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. Those who would contemplate challenging the United States would do well to remember the images of the fourth largest Army in the world crushed and burning in the wake of the most overwhelming onslaught of military power in the history of our nation. The 100 hours of the ground offensive clearly demonstrated what power projection is all about.

DESERT STORM was a triumph for our strategy and for the combined arms team. But it is also a victory in other, more direct ways. It was a victory for the American soldier — for men and women who are courageous in war, compassionate in peace, and committed to the defense of our nation. It was a victory for the infantrymen who, by

breaching the Iraqi defenses, led the way for the penetrations that ultimately outflanked and destroyed the Republican Guard. It was a victory for the infantrymen who conducted an historic air assault operation deep into Iraq in order to seize key terrain along the Euphrates River Valley, and it was a personal victory for the infantry sergeant who, although his own Bradley was hit when he dismounted his squad to help wounded comrades, calmly evacuated all the wounded while still under fire.

In each of these instances, and many others like them, these soldiers nobly upheld the infantry motto — Follow Me!



CHALLENGES

But we cannot afford to rest on our laurels. We face many challenges in the future that we must attack with the same resolution we displayed during DESERT STORM. I have grouped these challenges under three vectors, each of which must be successfully addressed as we move through the decade of the 1990s.

The first vector is DESERT STORM. Although the battlefields are now quiet, the Army must continue the arduous process of redeploying our combat power from the theater, and of reconstituting the force. We must return equipment and personnel to high states of training and readiness as we get our leader development program fully back on track.

At the same time, we must tackle the second vector — the sustainment of readiness worldwide. We have won three wars in less than 18 months: DESERT STORM, JUST CAUSE, and most importantly, the Cold War. We have no guarantee on how long it will be before we must deploy forces again. We only have to look to Operation PROVIDE COMFORT — begun before we have completed DESERT STORM — to illustrate clearly that we must be prepared to respond without hesitation to the contingencies of an uncertain future.

Finally, we must look ahead and continue the disciplined evolution of the Army into the force the nation will need to fulfill our strategy for the mid-1990s and beyond. In the years ahead, we will shape an Army of 20 divisions — active and reserve — an Army that will be the smallest since the eve of World War II. We must shape this smaller force in order to preserve training, readiness, and, above all, quality — the essence of the force that fought and won in DESERT STORM.

By the mid-1990s, we will have an Army that is perilously small for a nation with the global interests of the United States. It will be a force that is at its irreducible minimum. We, therefore, must reduce the force carefully, deliberately, and over time while ensuring that we sustain readiness and that we treat our soldiers with the dignity and respect they deserve.

As daunting a challenge as this may be, I believe that if we are imaginative, if we are determined, and if we are responsible, the result will be an Army that has the necessary characteristics to operate effectively in the strategic environment the United States will confront into the next century.

It will be an Army that is versatile in its ability to respond to a wide range of requirements in multiple theaters with force packages appropriate to the threats our nation will face. It will be an Army that is deployable in its ability to project power rapidly and massively throughout the world. It will be an Army that is expansible — able to grow rapidly to meet a resurgence of Soviet adventurism or the rise of violence wherever it threatens our interests around the globe. Finally it will be an Army that is lethal and can fight and win on any battlefield at any time. The violence unleashed during DESERT STORM only foreshadows our future capabilities. That is the Army the nation needs, and that is the Army that we must build.

VISION AND CONTINUITY

We can only achieve such a force if we have a clear vision for the future and if we are unyielding in our adherence to the guidelines that have been validated in the crucible of combat. The vision is of a trained and ready Army, today and tomorrow, capable of accomplishing its strategic mission anywhere, anytime. The architecture by which we achieve this vision is nothing less than I described in INFANTRY last fall: The Army's six fundamental imperatives — principles that are now firmly embedded in the Army at all levels. They are of profound importance and will provide the requisite continuity to see the Army through the coming years. As I review the imperatives, I challenge every leader to consider again how to apply them to develop better soldiers.

The first imperative — first listed and first in importance — reminds us that we must maintain the quality of the force throughout the total Army. We have achieved levels of quality unprecedented in our nation's history, and this must now be the unalloyed standard for the future as well.

Second, we must maintain an effective warfighting doctrine. At no time in our history has doctrine proven its importance so decisively. AirLand Battle is now part of the lore of America — manifest in the images of infantrymen assaulting from the skies hundreds of

miles behind enemy lines and of infantrymen in Bradleys racing north alongside Abrams tanks to seal the fate of the Iraqi Army.

And finally, AirLand Battle had its most eloquent expression in the striking image of the entire combined arms team crashing violently against the unsuspecting Republican Guard to destroy organized Iraqi resistance.

We must now ensure that our doctrine continues to evolve so that it will be as effective on the battlefields of tomorrow as it was during DESERT STORM. This is the task of AirLand Battle-Future. However, developing new doctrine is only part of the challenge. Success in the future will demand not only that every infantry leader understand our doctrine, but that he also bring it to life through tactics, techniques, and procedures that win in battle.

Third, we must maintain the right mix of forces — armored, mechanized, light, and special operations — within our active and reserve components. This has particular importance for the Queen of Battle because it underscores that we can no longer afford to have infantry leaders who are expert in only a single dimension of the mix of forces. Every one of you must understand that you cannot be solely light or mech or airborne or air assault or special operations — you are infantry and a principal member of the combined arms team.

Fourth, we must continue to train to tough, realistic standards — standards that are uncompromising in application and uniform across the entire force. We have a solemn obligation to our soldiers to ensure that they are as trained as we can make them. It was training that created the skill that permitted a Bradley gunner to engage and destroy two T-55 tanks in a matter of seconds and yet have the discipline to hold his fire when a white flag was raised from the turret of a third. One young infantry captain observed that it was difficult at times to remember he was at war because it was so much like his rotations at the National Training Center. The payoff for this investment in training was evident in the destruction of a powerful army, in the low casualties our forces suffered, and in the confidence conveyed by the simple statement of one of our returning soldiers. "When fear kicks in," he said, "training takes over."

Fifth, we must continue to modernize both our active and reserve component forces. In the sands of the Arabian Desert, we witnessed the life and death difference that modernization makes. The Bradley, so unjustly maligned in recent years, proved its worth in combat and provided an excellent example of the importance of modernization. Readiness rates remained at 90 percent or higher even in the intensity of battle. The Bradley helped set the blistering pace of the attack that was the hallmark of DESERT STORM. In a smaller Army, modernization will become even more critical throughout the total force.

Finally, we must continue to develop leaders — sergeants and officers — who are competent in the art of war. Gone are the times when all the infantry leader had to do was to stand at the head of a massed formation and point a sword, spear, or musket in the general direction of the enemy. Today, the modern infantryman must master a variety of individual skills and understand the integration of all elements of combat power. He must be responsible for his soldiers and committed to the defense of the nation. Consequently, we must now reapply the leader development programs with universal and renewed rigor.

At the unit level, you must provide operational assignments that develop the leadership skills of our young infantry officers and sergeants. At the same time, there must be incentives and role models for them to pursue self development. Perhaps most importantly, however, leaders must send their subordinates to the requisite schools, even if it means short term challenges to the organization. Remember, this is an investment not only in the future of our Army, but also the leaders we develop today will be our most enduring legacy to our country.

Above all, we must remember that we are soldiers and leaders — and as soldiers and leaders, we must apply these imperatives without compromise and without equivocation. For they are the blueprint for shaping the Army that the nation will require in the tumultuous times ahead.

CONCLUSION

Again, let me underscore the importance of the imperatives with a story — a story that goes to the heart of the phrase "trained and ready."

Our story begins in the early days of June 1950 with the elements of the U.S. Army serving on occupation duty in Japan. Nobody expected a war — and nobody wanted one. Nonetheless, as the spearhead of the United Nations' response to North Korea's naked act of aggression, Task Force Smith was scraped together from the occupation forces and dispatched to stem the onslaught. Task Force Smith had courageous men, but it was ill-prepared, undermanned, and ill-equipped — abandoned by a nation that had lost its vision of a trained and ready Army. Consequently, thousands of Americans died and our forces were nearly driven into the sea by a nation that, although impoverished and backward, was militarily prepared.

Our story now leaps ahead more than 40 years and half a world away. The soldiers of America's Army were again among the first to fight — walking point in an international coalition. But this time, they were trained to a razor's edge, led by sergeants and officers of unparalleled ability, and equipped with the finest weapons our nation could produce. Eight American Army divisions marched in secrecy through the desert, turned north into Iraq on 24 February, raced hundreds of kilometers, and waded into the heart of the Republican Guards, destroying division after enemy division and hundreds of Iraqi tanks until no organized resistance was left. All of this was accomplished at the cost of fewer than 100 soldiers.

But the rest of the story remains to be written. You and I are the authors who will define the Army of the future. As we move forward, we must never

forget that the high esteem America holds for its Army today has been purchased by the efforts, dedication, and, indeed, the blood of our soldiers. We have a sacred obligation to the soldiers of the future and to the soldiers of the past — to all the Task Force Smiths that have gone before and to all the soldiers who have laid down their lives never to permit our Army to be anything but trained and ready, and our soldiers to be led by anyone other than dedicated professionals who are competent, responsible, and committed. In this task, we cannot fail, must not fail, and will not fail.

One Place, Three Wars: Part 1

MAJOR GENERAL BERNARD LOEFFKE

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first of a two-part series. Part 2 will appear in our July-August 1991 issue.

To understand the United States' involvement in Vietnam is also to understand why we react as we do during crises. Our generals today were lieutenants, captains, majors, and lieutenant colonels during that war, which took more than 50,000 U.S. lives and lasted more than 10 years. As a result, most of us who are generals now, when we have to make decisions, refer consciously or subconsciously to our experience in that war. (Reading history, hearing lectures, and participating in maneuvers also assist us in preparing for combat, but nothing influences our decisions as much as our combat experiences do.)

Those of us who chose the profession of arms in the 1950s have spent the better part of our lives either preparing to fight or actually fighting communists or those supported by communists. For many of us that experience has been painful, to some final, but for most the exposure to actually fighting a committed opponent has been personally disquieting.

Let me explain. Although my experience at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point gave me an education, it left me unprepared for my first encounter with a communist. I had studied history but not how to be convincing in an argument with an educated communist. Today, because much of communism has been discredited by those who have tried to live under such a system, it is easier to defeat a communist verbally. But the dream of a more equitable society continues in the hearts and minds of many. In 1990, Latin American rebel leaders were saying, "Communism may not have worked in the Soviet Union, but we'll make it work here." These same rebels were saying that capitalism may work in the United States, but it doesn't work in Latin America.

Throughout history, man, in his attempt to create a fairer society that would ensure happiness for all, has experimented with different social systems. Greek philosophers wrote about the fair distribution of wealth, a theme also discussed in the Bible. Dissatisfaction with present systems will continue and will create friction. Peace is not at hand. Soldiers are still needed. But are the lessons we learned in Vietnam applicable today? Some are.

What follows is one soldier's attempt to document the lessons learned in his military career in the hope that the mistakes of recent history will not be repeated. My three "wars" in Vietnam provided very different experiences.

My initial involvement was part of an attempt to limit communism by using small groups of Special Forces soldiers. To keep our presence small, we sent volunteers to work with indigenous personnel. We trained them, helped them with equipment we gave them, called in air support, and, when needed, assisted in combat operations. This was my first war.

As the adversary raised his level of violence, we began to introduce advisors into the regular units of our allies, which gave us first-hand exposure to the techniques of employing large units in combat. Unfortunately, most of our advisors in this, my second war, served for only one year. After the year's tour, another American would arrive, forcing the Vietnamese to begin the education of their advisor for the third, fourth, fifth, or sixth time. (The Vietnamese had a favorite saying: "Americans have been here one year 20 times.")

In a war, there is no substitute for personal experience in making the would-be warrior wise. Therefore, the lessons I learned from my Vietnamese colleagues in the first two wars did prepare me to fight my third Vietnam war with U.S. troops.